**III**

*T anger J>* and *"El Filibusterismo"* ("The Reign of Greed"), and other works. In the Philippines once more, he inspired the formation of the Philippine League, which had the peaceful purpose of obtaining governmental reforms and economic improvement.

The foregoing brief and dry biographical data fail to bring forth the dramatic incidents in Rizal's life. To comprehend RizaPs place in history, one has to form a picture of the Philippines in the nineties under absolute Spanish domination. In such a setting it was treasonable for any Filipino publicly to criticize officialdom for allowing an oppressive administration to continue, and far more was it treasonable to even hint at a desire to see his country free. A Spanish Governor-General was accordingly only too ready to consider suspicions as proven facts.

Rizal was arrested and banished to Dapitan, although later he was permitted to sail for Spain. A pretext for again arresting him was found, and he was returned to Manila to stand trial before a military court. The charge laid against him was the formation of an illegal society, the Philippine League, and being responsible for the existing rebellion by his writings. No trained lawyer was there to defend him, and he was already convicted before trial. The tribunal imposed the death sentence.

The date is now December 30, 1896. In the early morning, as the dawn was breaking out of the horizon, Rizal made the journey on foot from Fort Santiago to the place of execution, the Bagumbayan field, now called the Luneta.

His arms were tied tightly behind his back and he was surrounded by a guard. A gay crowd of Spanish Army officers and civilians and their women-folk awaited him. Rizal asked to be allowed to face the firing squad, but the request was refused. With a normal pulse which drew forth an involuntary expression of admiration from the attending military surgeon, he stood there alone, not blindfolded, and was able to work one hand